

Hoima gets new technology to monitor HIV/AIDS patients

HOIMA

By Robert Atuhairwe
and Hope Mafaranga

As the country grapples with the challenge of following up on HIV patients and accessing updated data for efficient resource allocation and policy intervention, medical experts are excited about the HIV case-based surveillance (CBS) project.

The project being implemented by Makerere University school of public health with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) under Monitoring and Evaluation Technical Support (METS) programme.

It involves testing and sending HIV-positive to the anti-retroviral therapy (ART) clinic where the system captures their fingerprints.

It also involves tracking HIV-positive clients right from the point of testing, through the care services which include initiation on ART and monitoring patients improvement.

Medics are able to access a patient's file to know whether the patient is in the system or appearing in the system of another health facility.

While the project is being piloted in Kabarole district, it was launched in Hoima on Friday at the local government headquarters.

The METS programme has donated 38 computer systems and 26 solar panels, worth sh500m, to power the computers in health facilities that have no electricity.

It will be implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Health and Hoima district health department.

Dr Edgar Kansime, the project coordinator CBS, said the computers were donated to ease the capture of data.

"A network of facilities will be

Hoima district health officer Dr Joseph Ruyonga (left) receiving computers from Mbonye, (second-right) on Friday. Photo by Robert Atuhairwe

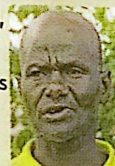


WHAT OTHERS SAY

Innocent Irumba, the head of Kyehoro Health Centre III
People have been testing at various facilities, which has resulted in inaccurate HIV prevalence data as one person is counted several times.



Jackson Mugenyi, district health secretary
The district merits more from HIV-related service providers due to the challenges resulting from an expected influx of people during oil production stages.



interlinked together to form one system. In case a client moves from one health centre to another, they will be able to track him/her," he said.

Kansime said the records will help in planning at national level to minimise wastage of drugs in hospitals.

Kansime said CBS is a five year

project which was recommended by the World Health Organisation.

Prof. Anthony Mbonye, the director general health services at the health ministry, while presiding over the function, thanked the Government for approving CBS, saying it is significant in the fight against HIV.

because they shall be using appropriate technology to monitor the trend of HIV.

He urged the district to maximise the support by METS to improve HIV services provision in the area.

Dr Allan Muruta, an assistant commissioner for disease control at the health ministry, said the HIV prevalence was increasing in the population, from 6.4% in 2004 to 7.3% in 2011.

He said by the end of March, the country had 980,000 out of the estimated 1.4 million Ugandans living with HIV having started taking ARVs.

However, the assistant commissioner explained that AIDS-related deaths dropped from 57,000 in 2010 to about 25,000 in 2015.

Charity Kyomugisha, the METS deputy programme manager, said the system will strengthen the fight against HIV by providing accurate information

Women activists demand action

Women rights activists have demanded stronger action against the perpetrators of child marriages in the region. During a regional annual women in leadership seminar held in Fort Portal recently, it was revealed that girls aged 13-15 years have been forcibly married off with consent of their parents because the parents are poor. According to the activists, 70 girls were married off last year in Ntoroko, while 30 have been married off since January.

MPs told to consult residents

Kiboga MPs have been tasked with carrying out village consultations to seek electorates' views on the Constitutional Amendment Bill. The residents asked Government Chief Whip who is also Kiboga Women MP, Ruth Nankabirwa and Keefa Kiwanuka, the Kiboga East MP to reject the bill. During an event to mobilise support for the education of needy children in Kiboga town on Sunday, political, religious and opinion leaders said the bill